

Renewed World Mission: Food for All!

by Marcia Merry Baker

The national and multi-nation initiatives over this Spring, to muster emergency food relief, and launch agro-production expansion programs in response to the world food system breakdown, constitute a return to the pre-GATT/WTO (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade/World Trade Organization) era, when collaborating to provide food for all was a presumed goal among nations. Two leading events in May typify the general thrust: the May 28-31 Yokohama summit of Japan and 52 African nations to confer on increasing food production in Africa; and the new Russian Five-Year Farm/Food plan announced May 19, to build up the agro-industrial complex for food self-sufficiency and surplus.

The following is an overview of the potential impact of such efforts, from the vantage point of the world as a whole, and what levels of production and improvements in consumption could be achieved in the short term and longer period, based on existing or recent patterns of farming activity and physical resources. There are urgent unmet needs.

In April, Lyndon LaRouche issued a call to “Kill the WTO,” and launch a drive to meet food needs, and Helga Zepp-LaRouche issued an international call for collaboration to double world food production as quickly as possible, as well as see to immediate emergency needs. Statements and strategies are now coming forward from numerous leaders, including those in Southeast Asia—the Council on Rice Trade Cooperation (China and Mekong River Basin nations), Malaysia and the Philippines; in Ibero-America—Honduras, Argentina; in Africa—Egypt, Senegal, Malawi; and of great strategic importance: the Eurasian giants, India, China, and Russia. Among the endorsements of this drive is that of the former Agriculture Minister in India, Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, who helped to bring about grain self-sufficiency of that nation in 1974, for the first time. That achievement came from collaboration with the Mexico-based agency, CIMMYT, and scientists from Mexico and the United States.

The same spirit is present in the May 28 speech by Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, who announced a commitment to double rice production on the continent of Africa within ten years. This would mean 30 million metric tons, up from 15 mmt at present (milled rice). In Russia, Agriculture Minister Alexei Gordeyev, said Russia’s State Plan will “make up entirely, within a five-year period, for the collapse of the agricultural output that occurred during the crisis of the 1990s.”

The import of all these moves together, is that the political momentum has now begun, to resume the pro-development, anti-globalization outlook that prevailed prior to the GATT-WTO decade of shift into radical free (rigged) trade. (The GATT “Uruguay Round” of so-called agriculture trade “reform” started in 1984, and culminated in 1994, with the establishment of the WTO in January 1995.) What the last 30 years show, is that the enemy of humanity, is the thinking and practices of the WTO, a warmed-over British Empire operation to subvert nations, foment wars, and cause endless misery. While today, no nation has as yet resigned from the WTO, nevertheless, the anti-British Empire movement is gathering force.

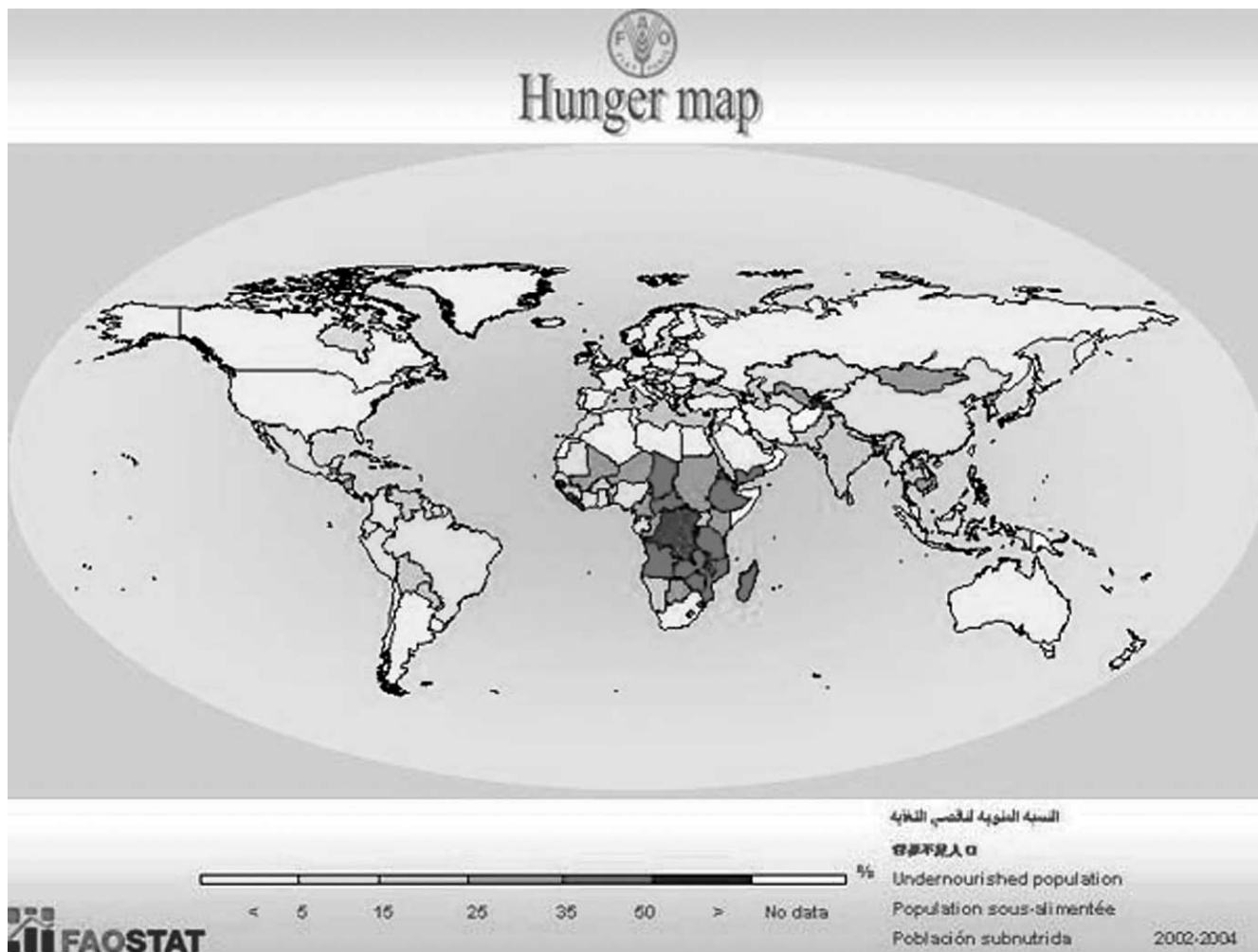
We here provide a situation report, as things stood on the eve of the June 3-5 Rome “High Level Conference on Food Security” of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). We provide benchmark parameters on volumes of food needed and where. The data come from the FAO itself, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and similar sources, and also from the new programs and surveys announced by specific governments and agencies seeking to expand food output capacity. Our coverage will be continued in more detail and scope in the coming weeks and months, from collaborators in action.

Why ‘Double’ World Food Production?

Total production of world grains can be taken as a marker for food-sufficiency or lack of food. In four of the last ten years, world output of basic cereals (rice, wheat, corn, and coarse grains) has been less than world consumption (either directly as food, or through the livestock feed chain, plus for deadly bio-energy usage). Since 2002, consumption of rice worldwide has exceeded production, hence today’s desperate need for rice. Even if bio-energy was cancelled tomorrow—as it should be—and the corn, wheat, and other crops flow back into the food and feed chain, the level of world grains production today is way below need.

Over the past three decades, the volume of grains produced per capita worldwide, has not only *not improved*, as it should have, in order to provide improving nutrition for a growing population, but has leveled off, and even fallen. **Table 1** gives the world annual grains output at five points in time, from 1970 to 2007, going from 1.079 billion metric tons (bmt) in 1970, to 2.082 last year. When this is taken on a per

FIGURE 1



UN Food and Agriculture Organization

capita basis, there is an evident increase from 0.292/ton in 1970, up to .372/ton in 1990—manifesting the impact of nations attempting to increase output; but then, even this too-slow progress was stopped. As the swindles of the “world market” system were imposed on nations by the IMF, World Bank, and then, the WTO, after 1995, food output capacity declined significantly. Table 1 shows that per capita grains output fell from 0.372/ton in 1990, down to 0.341 in 2000, and last year 0.315/ton.

Consider just the crudest calculations of where we are today. The 2.1 bmt of total grains output worldwide in 2007, works out for the world’s population of 6.6 billion people, at less than a third of a metric ton of grains per person per year. This can be visualized as merely 2 pounds of grain, or less than a kilo, per person per day!

There are three obvious aspects to this inadequacy:

First, some persons get the grain; millions do not. Look at the wide disparity as of 1980—before the GATT/WTO on-

slaught began; today, it is very much worse. In the United States and Canada, there were 1.225 tons of grains output per person in 1980; in Australia, 0.75 tons—these nations were source regions for the grain cartel exports. But in Africa, there

TABLE 1
World Grain Production Per Capita, 1970-2007, with 0.6 Tons/Year Desired

	Total (Billion Metric Tons)	Per Capita (Metric Tons)
1970	1.079	0.292
1980	1.5651	0.348
1990	1.9699	0.372
2000	2.0779	0.341
2007	2.082	0.315

Source: FAO.

was only 0.15/ton per person output. In Ibero-America, only 0.25/ton per capita. In the Asian Subcontinent, only 0.2/ton; in Southeast Asia, 0.25.

Today, the FAO displays the results of the worsening of this process of world food insufficiency, and disparity, in what they call the “Hunger Map” (Figure 1). Some 2 billion people, across 82 nations, do not have adequate food.

Secondly, the inadequacy of 2 pounds of grain output per person a day, automatically signifies that millions of people have no option for animal proteins in their diet. Feeding livestock on the scale required, means they must have grain rations, even if some of the animals can graze and utilize fodder.

Thirdly, the 2 pounds of grain per capita daily, does not even factor in the quantity that will be lost to spoilage, handling, processing, and set-aside for reserves, seeds, and so on.

In short, there are many oft-heard rationalizations for the current world food shortages, but they are lies, whether the teller knows it or not: It is untrue that, “there is enough food in the world, it is simply mal-distributed.” It is untrue that, “the world would have enough to eat, if eating meat was eliminated.” And the like.

Finally, there is the cavil that for millions of people, grains are not the staple; they depend instead on soy, or roots such as cassava, manioc, potatoes, and such. True, but the same principle holds across all food groups: The human right to food means to have it in abundance, and not be confined to minimal, grubbed out, barely human rations.

The results of all the nutrition studies done over the past 25 years, country-by-country, show that in simple quantities of daily calories, as well as nutrients, hundreds of millions of people are below survival rations.

Therefore, the starting point for any moral and scientific response to this global food and economic breakdown crisis, is to mobilize, at the least, *for doubling production*, and proceed on from there.

In simple terms of grain, this means aiming to produce 4 billion metric tons of grain a year, which gives a ratio of over 0.6/ton a day per person, as a referent. Even Jacques Diouf, the director of the FAO, has been speaking in terms of doubling world food production, despite his presiding over the FAO falling into line with the Gorey crimes of bio-energy and “adaptation” to the hoax of climate change, as well as to free trade.

Initiatives to double grain production carry with them the

FIGURE 2
Distribution of Major Cultivated Lands



Source: *The World's Nations*, Deasy, Griess, Miller, Case, 1958.

These world patterns are highly generalized. Not all parts of the white area are uncultivated, and the converse.

means and intent to increase output of meat, oils, vegetables, fruits, and other principal foods. To grasp the potential impact of the combined effect of the new national programs and collaboration efforts, look at these initiatives in terms of how they potentially can upgrade key parts of the world's broad patterns of crop cultivation, in terms of the basic parameters of world production of the three major grains (Figure 2).

Rice: Staple for 3 Billion People

Rice cultivation accounts for 13% of all the world's cropped agricultural land. In volume, it accounts for 20% of all world grain production. Three billion people depend on rice as their dietary staple, most of whom live in China and India; but millions more rely on rice, especially in Southeast Asia and Africa. In recent years, about 28 million out of 425 mmt of grains have been traded, or sent into food relief flows. Now, with the food crisis, this export flow is at risk.

Immediate food relief. Given the cumulative underproduction of rice in recent years, and now, the hyper-speculation, import-dependent nations have been caught desperately short. The interim solution can be seen in the return to nation-to-nation pledges to bridge the gap until more production is mobilized. For example, in May, Japan announced the release of 20,000 tons of rice for countries in Africa. Recipient countries are to include Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic, and Burundi.

“Surplus” regions for rice can provide additional grain over 24 months. The roster of rice-exporting nations includes Thailand, Vietnam, the United States, and until recently, Australia, as well as China, India, and Pakistan. If just the United States and Australia committed to enlarge their rice output for short-term relief, the volume could represent a net gain of

at least 2 million metric tons. The U.S. rice crop planting is now nearing the finish; and Australia is on the opposite season, but over the next 24 months, the harvests could be increased significantly. The roadblock is political—the unwillingness in Washington and Canberra to break with the imperial WTO system.

Increased production. Land area is not easily expanded, but yield increases from new, superior seedstocks, and from timely inputs, can be huge. Two new high-yielding rice varieties underscore the vast potential for increasing production. The NERICA variety—“New Rice for Africa”—is a protein-rich, weed-competitive, and pest- and disease-resistant grain, resulting from traits from African and Asian varieties. It has a capability of increasing yields by half. It results from international collaboration centered at WARDA, the West Africa Rice Development Association, in Benin, and other locations.

Another breakthrough rice, is the submergence-tolerant Sub-1 flood-resistant rice developed by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines. Farmers in India and Bangladesh will likely start commercial production and use of it next year, giving them protection against crop losses from heavy monsoon rains.

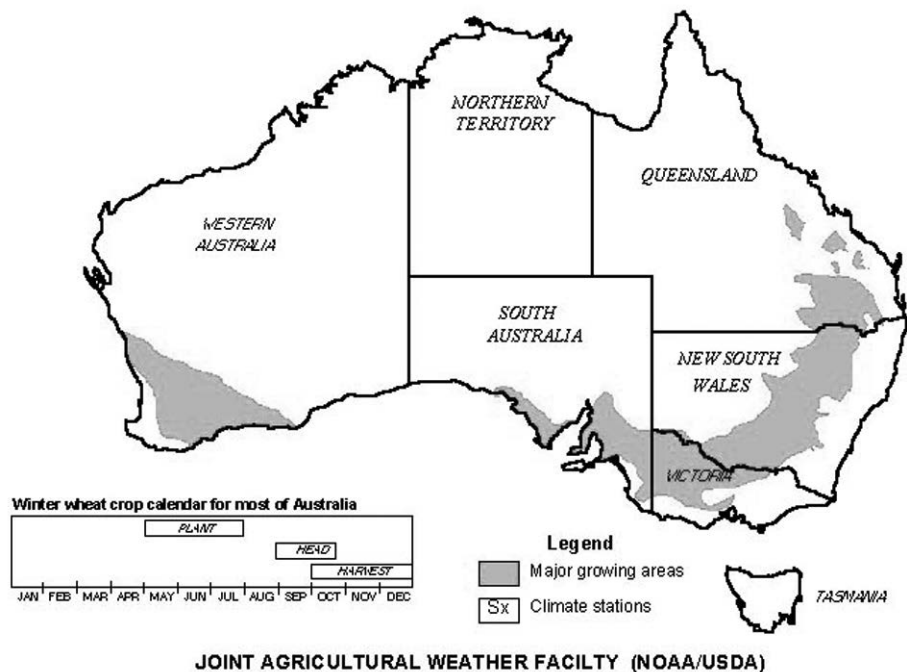
Wheat: Grown on 18% of World’s Farmland

Wheat cultivation accounts for 18% of the world’s cropped land area, the most for any one grain, and constitutes the daily staple for millions around the globe, from tortillas, to noodles, to bread. Wheat accounts for about 30% of all the grains produced globally.

Immediate food relief. Given the acute shortage of wheat for export or aid, it is imperative that wheat-for-ethanol use be stopped immediately, and grain commitments or actual stockpiles be diverted to food use.

“Surplus” regions. There is significant potential for increasing world wheat supplies at an accelerated pace, if a strategy is put into effect to make the best use of the sequence of Spring-planted and Winter-planted wheat in the two hemispheres. The map of Australia’s Winter wheat calendar and major production areas (Figure 3) makes the point that if support is given to the farmers—water access, credits, fair prices—output increases can be planned in the various lati-

FIGURE 3
Australia, Winter Wheat: Major Growing Areas, and Crop Calendar



Source: wbd.agr.mt.gov

tudes, from Australia and Argentina, to northern wheat belts in Canada and Russia.

Increased production. One of the most important support measures for increased production ahead, is to succeed in developing a wheat strain resistant to the UG99 wheat stem rust, which has proceeded from East Africa, across the Arabian Peninsula into Iran.

Corn: Stop Ethanol, Gain Food for Millions

Corn is grown on over 12% of the world’s cropped land area. The world’s harvest of corn, plus other coarse grains (sorghum, rye, oats), accounts for over 51% of all world grain output. The United States alone accounts for half of world corn production. Next in order of production come China, Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina, then India, France, and Indonesia.

Immediate food relief. Stopping corn ethanol in the United States, and elsewhere (e.g., Ontario, Quebec), can mean a volume of grain, and farm capacity involved in growing corn, amounting to food for 130 million people. Besides resuming availability for the livestock feed chain, some of this could be milled for human consumption for emergency relief, as well as for increasing meat output.

Surplus regions. There is capacity for more output centered in the pre-existing major corn exporting countries—the U.S.A., Argentina, South Africa, and Brazil, as well as

in other areas of potential.

Increased production. There are “cornbelts” of Africa and elsewhere, favorable to rapid increases in cultivation and yields, if the inputs are provided; and also, if the wrongful seed patent control is stopped over the bio-engineered seeds that have high-yield traits.

Immediate Progress

These rough calculations indicate that millions of tons of grains, as well as other foods, can be mustered from the current, and over the next four, growing seasons, drawing emergency supplies from the scarce stocks associated with today’s low 2.1 billion metric tons a year, and from net increases that can be achieved quickly. The same principles hold for soybeans, root crops and all principal foods. Russian Agriculture Minister Gordeyev, in presenting his Five Year Agriculture Plan, even referred to the ideal goal of producing one ton of grain for every person a year (see article, below).

Conducting this effort creates intense demand for re-establishing the world’s industrial base to support agriculture, by the provision of equipment, transportation, and energy. Along with this, must be the necessary cultural optimism, learning, and skills required to “get things running again.” Just how soon the output of world grains and other foods can be doubled, and then tripled and further increased, depends upon this broad mobilization to restore the full-scale economic capacity of nations.

Whether the food mobilization succeeds, rests not at all on the physical economic constraints considered “natural”—weather, soils, or even the broken-down industrial base, but instead on whether countries will break, once and for all, with the powers that have enforced years of destructive globalization. If we want to feed people, it’s the only way.

LaRouche: ‘24 Bushels a Person’!

In 1984, the same year that the GATT Uruguay Round of talks began in Punta del Este, for promoting radical free trade to benefit the private financial powers behind the cartels, LaRouche made it an international fighting issue to prevent the coming food crisis. In the U.S. Presidential election race, The LaRouche Campaign—his campaign committee for the Democratic Party nomination—aired two national half-hour television programs on the basics of the crisis, and issued a 50-page mass-circulation pamphlet. Titled, “The World Food Crisis of 1985,” the LaRouche document warned of the fall-off in agriculture production potential. He stated, “Don’t delude yourself by saying that, ‘They would never let it



Lyndon LaRouche, during the 1984 Presidential election campaign, made it an international fighting issue to prevent the food crisis that he saw coming. Shown here are clips from his August 1984 national TV half-hour broadcast, emphasizing the role of the cartel companies in driving family farmers out of business. In his bid for the Democratic nomination, he did two other TV shows on the topic, and issued a mass pamphlet.

happen.’” Now we see, they did.

To drive home the point of how much food is required—using the benchmark of grains, LaRouche called for building capacity to produce an overall volume giving 0.6/tons of grain per person per year, or 24 bushels per person (at 55 pounds per bushel, with 2,200 pounds per metric ton). *This is exactly what doubling world grain output means today.*

LaRouche explained, “To simplify matters, but without significantly distorting the total picture, let us look at *world grain production*. For a normal, balanced diet of approximately 2,400-3,500 calories per day, the average person worldwide will consume approximately 24 bushels of average quality of grain per year. This grain must be produced. It must be produced on existing acreage, or with an increase of that acreage. It must be produced with a present or improved average yield per acre under cultivation, and the yield of each acre will require a definite percentage of the total man-year’s labor agricultural labor.”

The data for various regions of the world were then compared, concerning agricultural land area, workforce in agriculture, yield of grains, availability of electricity and infrastructure, and so on. In the same way, various nations today

are beginning to analyze the particulars of their situation for the purpose of improvements, and dropping the WTO myth of “reliance on the markets.”

LaRouche summarized, in 1984, “You are now situated to tick off the following leading features of the food-crisis problem: We have in the world today, 21,396 million total acres of land for agriculture. Of this total, 11,285 million acres are presently in use. Of this, 1,828 million acres are in grain production, giving us a worldwide total of 62,440 million bushels (1,561 mmt). This breaks down to 14 bushels per year per person worldwide, against an estimated minimum requirement of 24 bushels. For a healthy diet, needed for disease-resistance and other urgent features of growth and bodily maintenance, we also require a ratio of 7 to 3 of dense protein to less-dense protein, and a recommended calorie ratio of 1 to 3 for fats to carbohydrates, other than protein. In short, the human race is in trouble. We must increase grain production for both human and animal consumption, based on the requirement to increase substantially production of animal protein and fat in such varieties as dairy, beef, and other mamma-

lian livestock, poultry and fish.

“The most rapid and substantial increase in output of all categories per acre available or equivalent, is the Western Hemisphere. We have in the Americas—especially in Canada, the United States, Colombia, southern Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina—the developed levels of technology, infrastructure, and labor force to accomplish large increases rapidly, provided high priority on development of large-scale water-management projects is applied, and that the methods of parity-system promotion of production proven during the 1940s are applied.”

Today, 23 years later, once the biofuels insanity is stopped, LaRouche’s advisory still applies. Of course, we now have to deal with the water shortages, soil damage, and other degradations of the resource base, and the suffering and loss of life—*none of which would have occurred*, except for the two and a half decades of the British Empire free trade. But today’s renewed mission to feed the world’s people, and the initiatives for Africa and Asia, and national programs such as Russia, show the way forward.

López Portillo’s Plan for Food Self-Sufficiency

Lyndon LaRouche’s friend, José López Portillo, during his 1976-82 Presidency, proposed a Mexican Food System (or SAM, for its Spanish acronym) which detailed how Mexico must, and could, attain food self-sufficiency and dramatically improve the level of food consumption by Mexico’s poor.

In a March 1, 1980 memo drafted by the Office of Advisers of the President, an ambitious, can-do physical-economic proposal is detailed, which, in its prescience, reads as if it had been written yesterday. Like most of López Portillo’s actions—including his October 1982 United Nations speech, and his break earlier that year with the policies of the IMF that were strangling Mexico—it serves as a useful aide memoire for those who wish to seriously address the current systemic breakdown crisis, including the food catastrophe.

The 1980 memo begins with a “Strategic Outlook,” which says that Mexico should take advantage of its recent giant oil discoveries, and move to achieve “a rapid increase in the production of basic food, and the multiple means of supporting the consumption of the impoverished majorities of Mexico. . . . We propose an ambitious scheme of production of basic foods, aiming at self-sufficiency.”

The memo continues: “The viability of Mexico seems to increasingly assert itself, in a world in crisis where grave confrontations are being prepared. . . . We have a favorable energy situation which allows us to eliminate restrictions to development and financial sovereignty. . . . Our government has the perhaps unrepeatable and unique possibility of satisfying, without unnecessary concessions, our great potential for growth, broadening the productive base and the internal market, thereby establishing the solid bases of sovereignty and of an efficient and powerful economy. . . .

“We now have the elements needed to grow without the restraints of foreign strangulation and financial servitude. . . . Only by the route of massively producing and distributing basic foods, can the country organize itself to save its agriculture.

“A policy of self-sufficiency in basic foods, above all cereals and oilseeds, is necessary. . . . We believe that the ‘wage commodity’ par excellence, food, cannot be subjected to the whims of foreign supply. . . . We also see that, in this case, the premises of ‘comparative advantage’ . . . must be subordinated to the need to take a step towards a real and efficient potential of producing basic grains. . . .

“In point of fact, five or six firms, mostly American, control nearly 85% of the world market in grains. . . .”

The document’s strategic overview concludes by decrying “the real deterioration observed in the nutrition of more than half of the planet’s inhabitants over the last decade, as the FAO [UN Food and Agriculture Organization] has noted.”